Fellowship in Prayer

"For a world united in prayer"

We are far too apt to limit the great doctrine of the Incarnation. Whatever it may mean, it means at least this—that in the conditions of human life we have access, as nowhere else, to the inmost nature of the divine.

— A. S. Pringle-Pattison

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OUR PURPOSE

To promote the practice of prayer among ALL religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God, regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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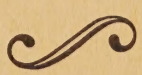

FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

22 East 29th Street New York 16, N.Y.

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THOUGHTS AT CHRISTMAS

EACH YEAR AT CHRISTMAS TIME my heart grows sad that, after two thousand years, conditions are much the same. God must look down in pity at our sins, weaknesses, doubts, our lack of progress, our childish reactions to our joys and sorrows, our love for power. It is a personal thing with me when I think of how often I have failed Him because the person in need was dirty or unkempt, or unlovely or whined—because there were more pleasant things to do or sheer laziness or procrastination kept me from ministering to those in need. I remember that we make our big decisions by our petty daily decision to please ourselves. I wander from my path and the star grows dim and tarnished and I must find my way back to the beginning and ask forgiveness.

On earth He had only a few close friends, at times His immediate family thought Him demented and it is the same today. We say we believe and want to follow Him, but what we do drowns out what we say.

YES, AT CHRISTMAS I AM SAD. Wasted opportunities are always sad. How many fighting wars have we had? How many cold wars? If we are completely honest we can see that we crucify Him over and over again with our selfishness and fear, distrust between man and his neighbor, one government for another, our unconcern for hunger, poverty, disease and ignorance.

This Christmas have your beautifully decorated tree, your big dinner, but share them with someone who is lonely, give a gift to someone in an institution who cannot possibly repay you except with a smile or a touch of the hand, or do something daring with your faith and money, take a basket to a hungry family, take a shut-in for a drive, but keep Christmas in your heart and take time to be kind and considerate. And remember your family likes daily love and consideration as well as gifts. Rededicate yourself to Him and keep a True Christmas.

—And it need not last just one day unless you let it.

— Janet Hackney

EDITORIAL

CHRISTMAS: BIRTH OF A HERO

The gaiety and fellowship of this most joyous of seasons should not allow us to forget the fierce and consuming renunciation of the life of him whose birth we celebrate, his ruthless and self-conquering heroism, his years of long and arduous discipline. We should remember that his gentleness and meekness were supported by a will of adamant, which he, as we will have to do, had forged through years of spiritual struggle.

It is good to recall that at the hour of his birth he was hunted by enemies and at the hour of his death abandoned by friends, that his life was one of unending struggle and conflict, and that the intervals of agonizing self-analysis, of momentous doubt and hesitation, recorded in the New Testament, are doubtless not the only such times he knew.

His has been called the greatest life because it encompasses all the experiences of human existence: in its totality we see the whole adventure of the soul awakened and driving to its goal epitomized, magnified, painted in colors for all to see. But he also had the tests and trials that we face, if on a greater scale than ours. He had to overcome his own tremendous challenges before he won through to victory and final enlightenment. He did not deny the existence of evil and of evil forces in the world, but overcame them and in the end emerged beyond all fear and grief, beyond both good and evil. If this great hero of the race did not escape the impact of evil, doubt, agony, loneliness, struggle and depression, neither can we. But as he conquered, so can we.

He had some close friends for a few years but they were not with him at the end. Of his innermost circle one doubted him, one denied him, and one betrayed him. The priests were in league against him. The Jews as a whole did not understand him, or his mission. Those about him, whether friend or foe, constantly reveal a deep ignorance of his nature and grasp with difficulty the substance of his words. One feels that all through the gospels. Throughout there is a pervading sense of a general lack of enlightenment about the nature of the man, and of his work. Even his mother only dimly senses what he was to become. *"Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come."* (John 2:4)

It was a life harried and hunted, a severe, lonely life. He is the most solitary figure in history, the loneliest hero. Even in the midst of his closest friends and admirers, one feels his apartness, as well as that heroic, uncompromising vein of iron in his character.

As we relax in warm, well-lighted rooms and listen to the carols, let us not forget his bitter, lost years of struggle, of spiritual discipline, of lonely exploration of the vast world he found within him. Those years, the time of his twenties, was the period of his wandering and seeking, a period of intense and unending conflict with himself and with all the forces in the universe that would have had him fail in his great quest. It was the time when he tried to remember who he was and why he had come.

At length, armed with invulnerable inner power, so that none could withstand his force, he began his difficult ministry. But unbelieving countrymen, the hostility of authority, skeptical followers and a mystified family were the least of his burden. His real cross was within—the weight of all the evil from all of the past and all of the future that pressed upon his spirit, the almost hopeless ignorance in which men, century after century, still slumbered, unaware of themselves and of their true natures, and his consciousness of the almost hopeless ignorance in which, for centuries to come, they would continue to slumber. And the burden of his own responsibility, the mission he had accepted, the task he had imposed upon himself—would he fail? Would it be too much? But he must *not* fail. Too much depended on his acceptance of the bitter cup that he must drink.

And the heaviest of all his crosses—the weariness of spirit and of flesh that plagued him, his desire for respite, the unremitting strain, the protest of mind and body against the enormous weight he carried, the crushing burden of destiny that pressed continuously upon him—also, his fear of the unknown, the still lingering resistance of the humanity and private will left in him, and his endless fight against these temptations, the power of his higher will awakening in all its intensity, his heroic consecration to his mission becoming inflexible and absolute; finally, the leap of his soul into the divine fire and his thrust of courage, beyond understanding, to experience the highest pitch of consciousness the human mind can know, to dissolve himself—ego, will, existence—in the light of pure being, and so become immortal, a saviour of the world.

We should think of these aspects of his life as we celebrate his

birth, for his achievement is meaningless unless we remember his teachings and try, to the best of our power, to follow the example of his heroism. A few gifts at Christmas, a few good wishes, will not compensate us for failing to take up the challenge which his life imposes on us.

The hero that was in Christ is in us, the God that was in him is in us too, and it is the same God. His greatness is innate in us as well, and is there for our discovery and knowledge.

We must accustom ourselves to thinking like heroes, to being heroes. The idealistic life is for heroes only. And the hero is he who has the mind of a hero: *the restrained mind.* Heroism is checking the senses and controlling the mind under all circumstances. *Heroism is self-restraint.* Anyone can give way. It is weakness to give way to pressures, external or internal. Self-restraint is what we want, conquest of the senses—therein is the greatest manifestation of power, of true heroism.

Can we be heroic? We feel we are capable of it. Deep down, we feel that it is our destiny to become strong, powerful, unshakeable, heroic, spiritually independent of the world, fearless as lions, free as God. We were not born for death or for the forms of death-in-life: fear, weakness, doubt, ignorance, bondage to our minds, to our pasts. Souls sent out from the infinite Soul of God do not want to live like weaklings, forever postponing the hour of decision, of commitment.

Let us take up the challenge of his life and measure our achievement against the pattern of his, see where we have fallen short, try again, fail again, a thousand times perhaps, and try again another thousand times, until eventually we break through into the same freedom and self-conquest that Christ experienced—and know, directly, the same soul that he knew, the same Truth, and the same God.

Know ye not that ye are gods?

— Jesus

MY GREAT DESIRE

Years ago I had a dear friend known to thousands of people all over the world as Sir Harry Lauder. *He was famous as a comedian and singer of Scottish songs.*

I KNEW HIM as the helper of many, a gifted writer, a loyal friend; and also as a man who passed through great sorrow, and who found that God is nearest when most needed.

Harry Lauder *told a story I will always remember. He said, "One night I was watching an old lamp-lighter passing along a dark street, lighting the gas lamps with a torch on a long pole. I could not see the old man himself, for it was very dark at the foot of the lamp-posts, but I knew where he had been by the row of lights he left behind him."*

AND THIS IS MY GREAT DESIRE in life—to be a "lamp-lighter" in God's name, brightening other lives, changing gloom into glory, burden into blessing, and sadness into song, through the supreme "Lamp-Lighter"—the Lord Jesus Christ.

— Dr. W. J. Thompson

CHRISTMAS MORNING

I walk through the snow, alone and glad,
Spring was never as lovely as this;
The sun on my lips is a white-rose sun,
Stirring and warm as my small son's kiss.
The morning air is sweet as an infant's breath,
Its touch on my cheek is gentle as baby's hand.

— Carla Patsuris

A Little Known Story About A Memorable Event.

The Man Who Gave Joy To Christmas

Albert N. Williams

What can Christmas mean this year? To thousands of Christians in the East, this Christmas will have nothing left that is sacred to be honored, for the giant behemoth of anti-Christ has subtly and inexorably torn the roots of Western Christian civilization out of more than half the world. This winter the very land from which the Wise Men came to visit the Christ child looks more and more with bane and suspicion on the people of the West, who are trying to spread his message of Peace to the world. Throughout all too many of the nations of the earth, this Christmas will pass in an atmosphere of threat and disaster, and through the long, dark night of Christmas Eve armed sentries will pace their marches, staring into the black horizons, not for any joyous tidings but for the signs of conflict. On this Christmas there is little evidence left to much of the world that Christ was ever born at all.

And yet Jesus does have a memory left among a few of the peoples of the earth. While the diplomats and military leaders may pass their Holy Eve in the planning of compromise with the foe and the launching of assaults to betray that compromise, in millions of humble homes throughout all the nations another and more gentle matter comes forward to occupy men's minds for a few quiet hours. Behind locked doors, drawn curtains, and barred walls, a shrub of green stands bravely decorated in the center of the family gathering room, and for the still hours of the night the thoughts of strategy lie sleeping while men, women, and children of a multitude of Christian beliefs enact the holy drama of the Nativity. Treaties, pacts, and secret agreements have proved their falseness, and the armies their weaknesses and frailties, but this tender ritual exists as it has for nearly a thousand years—one of the few human activities that bodes to have the strength to remain unengulfed by the tide of world disaster.

The center of the crude stage under the Christmas tree is a manger, a precious reproduction, as a child might make, of the legendary stable corner where the Christ child was born. According to the ingenuity of the family, other objects in greater or lesser profusion adorn the scene. The Holy Mother is portrayed holding her babe. Richly dressed Magi stand in reverent attendance upon the pair. Angels and cherubim are often set about the outer edges of the miniature pageant. The legendary shepherds with their tiny flocks

sometimes march across the floor toward the scene. And almost always images of the ox and the ass serve to point up the rudeness and the harshness of the unused animal stall which was the scene of that most miraculous event in the world's history.

This cradle pageant, this dwarfed drama of the Nativity, this so oft repeated sacred scene is a comparatively late addition to our Christian celebration of the birthday of our Lord, and the story of its invention is a tale bearing deep meaning for the world today, for it was especially created by one man for the purpose of bringing back to earth the true nature of Christ's human personality—humility and gentleness.

Giovanni Bernardone was born in the year 1182 in the little Italian town of Assisi. His mother was a native of Provence, and as young Giovanni grew up he inherited so much of his mother's Gallic gaiety and French ebullience that his playmates nicknamed him Francesco—"The Frenchman." Throughout all his life those gay spirits stayed with him, and his given name was before long forgotten and he became known to all the world of his time simply as Francesco d'Assisi or, to us in English, Francis of Assisi.

Above all Francis was a great-hearted man. In his adolescent years he assumed the natural leadership of his companions, and his days and nights were filled with laughter and singing. Francis himself had only one ambition during his youth, and that was to be a troubadour and to spend his life traveling about the world singing the sheer joy of life.

He was twenty-two years old when the spirit which changed his future descended upon him. According to the stories given by his biographers, he underwent an extreme illness at that age; an illness which lasted for many months, during which time his parents despaired of his very life. At last the fevers eased and the young man began to regain strength. During the long days of his convalescence he found an amazing new friend—the sun. It was the sun's warm rays which gave him the will to recover, and it was only out in the open fields and under the sun that he knew true happiness.

During this trying period of his life, Francis came to learn that all worldly goods and human possessions counted for naught, and that only God's gifts of benign nature were worth a man's possession. His vow, as he came to understand the nature of the follies of his youth, was to embrace poverty and to live completely apart from the clinging demands of wealth and property. Only through a complete reversion to the rudest of garments and crudest of human comforts, thought Francis, could a man truly follow in the foot-

steps of Christ. With Brother Sun and Brother Wind as his companions and nothing but the poorest of rags on his back, Francis set out through the world to sing simply the joy of God's grace and the jubilation of following in Christ's steps.

How this self-impoverished man who denied himself even the money to buy a Bible helped change modern history is a great and dramatic story which has often been told. From all over Europe men hungry for a truer devotion to God flocked to his standards, and partly through his efforts to simplify and humanize Christian worship, the intellectual shackles of the Dark Ages were broken, and the Renaissance was permitted to spread its vast radiance of new learning through Europe.

But apart from his far-reaching innovations in Christian thinking, one of the most important contributions which he gave the world was a simple dramatization of the Nativity. Over the centuries the precepts and ideals of the Franciscan order helped shape the course of progress, but only one undertaking of his has come to us unchanged through the centuries—the pageant of the birth of Christ.

Learning was at a great premium in Francis' day. None but the most highly educated prelates could read the Scriptures, and to the average man the story of Christ was misty and hazy and beclouded in learned discussions of vague Church dogma and doctrine. The simple peasants to whom Francis attempted to minister had been taught about Christ, and even of his mercy and tenderness, but he was brought to them as a distant and forbidding figure whom no one could even so much as hope to imitate in actual life.

Francis saw this state of affairs as a tragic miscarriage of religion. On every hand he beheld the poverty-stricken and ignorant man of the soil being kept from a knowledge of Christ by the abstractions and coldness of the very religion which Christ brought to earth. Above all, Francis saw that the people to whom he preached were unable to conceive of Christ as a human being who had walked on earth and who had suffered, as his vast congregations were suffering, from the ordinary misfortunes and injustices of life.

His concern was particularly acute at Christmas, for on that day of all days, when the Church celebrated the birth of the Master, Christ was held most distant from men. His deliverance of mankind was celebrated in the ponderous and splendid Latin chants of Christ's Mass, and his mission on earth was dramatized by a maze of complicated symbols which none but the most thoroughly initiated could understand.

This was wrong, as Francis saw it. He conceived of Christ's Mass not as an occasion for mystic medita-

tion but as a day of jubilance, on which men and women should sing their joy at the glad tidings of Christ's coming. He wanted them to know Christ not as a forbidding figure who brought a vastly intellectual and dogmatized message to the world, but as a humble man who had been born into harsh circumstances and who had conquered the world through his endless tenderness and humanity.

It was in the year 1223 that Francis solved this puzzle and hit upon the happy idea of dramatizing the Nativity in terms that his humble followers could understand. In that year, in the town of Greccio, which was not far from his native Assisi, he perceived the citizens preparing to go to church for the customary sacred celebration of Christmas. Francis was to preach to them on this occasion, and to make his message of Christ's humanity the more understandable, he sent for one, Giovanni, and asked him to bring a quantity of hay and straw and an actual manger from an unused stable. These objects he set up in the church and then, to make the scene actually come to life, he borrowed an ox and an ass from one of the townspeople. He tethered these beasts to the stall and from this very spot, amid the rustle of the animals and the muffled clodding of their feet against the manger, he told them the Christmas story—how the Christ child had been born in precisely such surroundings, and how he had gone out into the world not as a splendid warrior in armor, but as a poor man of the most humble origins.

Across all Europe Francis' innovation spread within the year. Here, for the first time, was a sacred drama which the common man and woman could understand. Here was the Christ that they could comprehend, born of a human mother and born into ordinary human poverty. As Francis told the story of the Master and His mission in the world, it was of His humility that he spoke, of His gentle nature, and of His great mercy for the unfortunate, the poor, and the sick. Here was a new figure of Christ, and one which the people at last could understand and worship, and even, as Francis himself tried to do, imitate in their daily life.

Every hearth in Christendom has since become an altar on Christmas Eve, with the happy voices around the quaint little mangers singing of the wonders of that Miraculous Event.

(In FAITH TODAY)

THE LONGING FOR EXPERIENCE

"...In this age of widespread cynicism intellectual expositions of spiritual values are limited in their basic appeal. In a peculiar way the people the world over are returning to the values of the heart and to the experiences that transform life, here and now. The longing is for experience, for transformation from the benighted life into that of a radiant being. Man is beginning to live again.

"...WHEN JESUS SAID, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,' he was demanding from man a complete self-purification which alone could provide the key to the vision and awareness of God. In this sense the method of all the higher religions are highly scientific. They demand straightforward action from the individual and an experimental attitude based upon personal discoveries, trials, and spiritual experiences. Thus in the final analysis the highest religious life is individualistic. It is a challenge to the individual man to transform himself in the light of his inherent and immense potentiality.

"...Upon analysis, every higher religion is existential because it seeks to transform man, to elevate his consciousness, to express in him the higher values through action, aspiration and awareness.

"...WE MUST NOT BE DISHEARTENED by the widespread discontent, the pervading unrest, the air of universal disillusionment. *They are the necessary prelude to the grand symphony of spiritual life that is about to begin."*

— Swami Parampanthi
(In a letter to FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER)

I DO NOT BELIEVE that our experience is the highest form of experience extant in the universe. I believe rather that we stand in just the same relation to the whole universe as our canine and feline pets do to the whole of human life. They inhabit our drawing-rooms and libraries; they take part in scenes of whose significance they have no inkling.

— *William James*

THE SECRET OF PRAYER

The scientist today is very much aware of the mysterious forces in the universe which cannot be explained in physical terms. The doctor and psychologist who probe deeply into the delicate mechanism of mind and body return with ever-renewed and profound respect for a power so tremendous that only the comprehension of the basic fundamentals is possible.

WHEN MAN CAN STILL his conscious thought, make humble his heart, and acknowledge the presence of this blending of the Alpha and Omega in one, he then is able to speak to this radiant cosmic truth from the secret depths of prayer.

Unless man can forget the Adam part of his nature and recognize the Christ within him, he does not truly pray with all his soul. The Adam-ego must be constrained and purged and the Christ-love made a perpetual way of life, making prayer a living reality in our daily lives. Mankind can never stray far from the Divine image if he immerses his thoughts and prayers in the Divine will and plan.

THIS DAILY UNDERSTANDING of the infinite, all-pervading love should be as natural to our thinking as the rhythmic breathing-in of the life-sustaining air which we take from our natural world. The unseen mystic part of our existence is Life itself.

No prayer can be answered, establish faith, or perform its miracle unless the absolute assurance that man believes in the presence of a living God has become part of his own conscious being. When this is done he has the greatest key given to man, that of prayer which unlocks the door to heaven.

— Zelma Dennis

JESUS PREACHES IN NAZARETH

(Luke 4: 16-30)

Mildred Long

After a successful ministry in Caperneum Jesus came to Nazareth, his home town. On the Sabbath He went into the Synagogue, as was His custom, to worship. He read to those assembled from the book of Isaiah, chapter 61.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

HE CLOSED THE BOOK and sat down, and said unto them, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." The eyes of all were fastened upon Him.

His gracious words flowed: "I am that anointed one. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me and I am sent to you to heal the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, to bring good tidings to the meek. I am come to give you beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. All this, that you may grow into righteousness and that God Himself shall be glorified."

The familiar words of Scripture fell like balm on those listening ears. The soft, vibrant tones of the speaker, tones full of love and compassion, melted their hearts and held them in rapt attention. Leaning forward and gazing fixedly into His face, they waited for more. Life and the beginning of joy quivered on the threshhold of their consciousness.

Jesus continued: "I am that anointed one. I am come to seek and to save that which was lost. Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. If any man thirst, let him drink of me for I am the Water of Life, and it shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. I am the Bread of Life. He that eateth of me shall never hunger. I am the Light of the world. The light shines in darkness and no evil can put it out. Believe on me, receive me, for I am sent to you to redeem you."

TOTALLY ABSORBED in His words, completely oblivious to physical surroundings, they were held spell-bound.

Again the vibrant voice: "He that cometh to me shall never be turned away. Leave all and follow me. For he that loveth father or

mother more than me is not worthy of me. Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit."

"What is this about death? Leaving one's dear ones?" They began to ask. "What can he mean?"

They began to glance a each other. Rapt attention relaxed into doubt, questioning.

Jesus knew their hearts. "Yes, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself and follow me. For he that would save his life shall lose it, and he that will lose his life for my sake shall find it unto life eternal."

NOW THEY ARE SURE their ears did not deceive them. He has changed his tune, his message. What is all this about dying and losing one's life? They settled back on their heels and waited, not with expectant joy, but with apprehension. Something had gone wrong.

Again Jesus spoke: "I know you will say to me, Look to yourself before you preach to us. I know you think you know me because I grew up among you. For it is always true that a prophet is not without honor save in his own country and among his own people. Nevertheless I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

They could endure no more. As one man they rose up, thrust him out of the door, pushed and pulled him in their anger to the brow of the hill on the edge of town. Shouting, reviling, infuriated by his insinuations, they were ready to do away with him.

WHO WAS THIS impostor? What had happened to the mild, meek carpenter of their village? Who does he think he is to speak with such authority and boldness, to accuse them of needing salvation, to propose they give up their lives, to suggest that he alone knew the way to God? Such blasphemy! Such arrogance! They would push him over the cliff and be done with him!

But He walked through their midst and went His way, leaving them bewildered and crest-fallen.

IF JESUS SHOULD come to your town today with His gracious words, would it be different?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Bess Foster Smith

"Can we see God?" asked four-year-old William Blake of his father. It is a wise father who knows how to answer that question, but William's father, although only a poor hosier, was a wise man. He took his small boy on his knee and said, "Yes, my child, we *can* see God. He is the light and the warmth of sunshine, He is all things within and outside of us. We see him everywhere."

So it is little wonder the angel-child had a vision of God that very night that influenced his whole life. In one of his poems he says,

> The angel that presided at my birth
> Said, 'Little creature, formed of joy and mirth,
> Go, Love, without the help of anything on earth.'

And he did just that. He lived on earth from 1758 to 1824, and became a poet, an artist, an engraver of books without much help from earth but by some inner illumination that was able to recognize

> A world in a grain of sand,
> A heaven in a wild flower

and an infinity that could be held in the palm of one's hand.

But it was not until the present day that his symbolic language and abstract paintings have been appreciated by the critics. At the time he lived he was considered queer and eccentric by his contemporaries, but since Picasso and other surrealists he has been pronounced the perfect abstractionist, the true mystic, the interpreter of esoteric symbolism.

There is one great difference, however. William Blake's life was pure from childhood. He knew himself to be a creature of God. He saw only Heavenly Light, when, in search of soul substance, he cast his eye inward. So naturally he painted his figures bathed in light and beauty. There was never anything sordid or heavy or dark in his paintings. In constrast to this, the modern surrealist who resorts to a dream world (often an escape from a distasteful reality) finds only grotesque and distorted visions beneath the surface.

Of course Blake did not have modern psychologists to tell him about the suppressed potentials of beasts and crimmals that lurk beneath our thin veneer of culture, so naturally his pictures reflected only "sweetness and light." He said he could feel the presence of angels hovering near him as one feels the presence of a friend.

ASPECTS OF PRAYER

ALL FORMS OF PRAYER are of value because Prayer leads man to an awareness of Something in the universe greater than himself. But like so many other things there are degrees or gradations in Prayer that ought to be understood. A prayer that is a mere supplication has its merits but also its limitations too; for when we supplicate God we assume that we can cajole God into bestowing upon us a favor. We petition Him for a grant—to give us this or that. This assumes that God can be coerced. Most people when they think of Prayer think in terms of supplication.

But Prayer, in order to bring results of an intelligent character, must be thought of on a much higher plateau: namely, of communion with the Divine. The response to this kind of Prayer not only depends upon what God does but even more directly upon what a man is willing to do.

We can be certain that God is willing—but are we? We will never get anywhere with Prayer as long as we think that God is the great magician who will manipulate the laws of Life just for us.

GOD IS HARMONY, Truth, Goodness, Beauty—God is Law and Order—God is also Love and Freedom of Will. As we enter into a mature relationship with these manifestations of God, our prayer of communion will bestow upon us an affirmative understanding. We will be joyously led into new patterns of thought. This kind of prayer leads to communion and the elimination of all discord.

—Rabbi Ernest R. Trattner

To see a world in a grain of sand
And a heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand
And eternity in an hour.

— William Blake

A Message From the Middle East

PRAY FOR WORLD PEACE!

Dear Brothers and Friends,

It is becoming increasingly difficult to speak to people about God. They no longer seem to listen, or to care. This is a dreadful state of affairs and something must be done about it immediately.

THERE IS SOMETHING you and I can do together in the right way, and that is to speak to God for mankind. He will listen. He always cares.

Humanity has become a big quarrelsome family, each member of the family sulking in his own room, behind the tightly locked steel doors symbolized by different religions, creeds, sects, faiths, ideals, ways-of-life and ways-of-death. All the members are secretly planning and scheming on how to murder their brothers.

WE CORDIALLY ASK YOU, my dear brothers and sisters, to help open wide those cold, rusty doors with the magic key of Love, of Joyful Prayer, for "a house divided" cannot stand at all.

We propose that you dedicate yourself, ten minutes in the morning and also at night, to an ardent, sincere, heart-felt, humble prayer for the exaltation of mankind, for our God who can keep this world from wars and troubles, and for peace and justice here on earth. Will you please do it?

HOW MUCH WE NEED YOUR urgent and loving prayers in order to help to dissipate the dark, ghastly, atomic storm-clouds gathering rapidly on the horizon. We assure you that even a short but sincere, daily, heart-to-heart talk to our God for mankind will save the world more than you will ever know here on earth.

When praying, please forget who and what you are. Renounce self and become one with all. Pray for all the peoples in the world. Remember that we are all brothers and sisters in spirit (yes, even our so-called enemies): all sons and daughters in the world are brothers and sisters. We must respect one another and love one another. Desire earnest-

ly to become a pure, perfect, humble channel for spreading God's mighty, spiritual and healing power to all His creatures, in every country under the sun. Help to save mankind through prayers, not through guns and bombs. Let's build a better, nobler, happier, safer, and more beautiful world for your children and ours to live, love and work in; and for all who are dear to our hearts.

LET US PRAY for the establishment of spiritual brotherhood of mankind. Let us pray for love and peace and for the happiness of all the peoples in the world.

Pray to God in your own time, in your own way, in your own words, in your own languages, in your own holy place of worship, and through whomsoever you wish to pray. We merely ask you to pray humbly, from the bottom of your heart and soul.

Here, we are praying daily to our God, our heavenly father, who says in His Book, the Koran:

> *"And their Lord hath heard their prayers (and He saith) Lo! I suffer not the work of any worker, male or female, to be lost. Ye proceed one from another."*

MAY GOD BLESS and protect you all.

— Dr. Mohammed F. M. Awad
Cairo, Egypt.

▼▼▼

I OFFER UP

For all the saints and mystics who have known
The world before me without bitterness,
I offer up all wisdom of my own,
All understanding, all my tenderness,
That, walking in their footsteps, I may find
A growing measure of serenity,
Enlightenment where I have been so blind,
Awareness of the final mystery.

— Alice Mackenzie Swaim

UNANSWERED PRAYER

Be patient, O my soul! Unanswered prayer
Hangs sometimes like a pall upon the air.
I pray, then wonder have I done my part,
And search the deep recesses of my heart.
Have I the faith, the love, to ask in need,
And wait God's own fulfillment in the deed?
When I can say, "Thy will be done, not mine,"
Peace in my troubled soul begins to shine.

— *Grace Barker Wilson*

APPLES OF GOLD

A word fitly spoken is like apples
of gold, in pictures of silver.
(Prov. 25:11)

Words fitly spoken
Like apples of gold,
Grow ever more lustrous
As ages unfold.

Surrounded by silver,
Immune to decay,
Time never can tarnish
Or take them away.

Then let us converse
In symbols of light,
Dissolving the dark
Dispelling the night;

And when sun and moon
And stars have grown old,
The fruit of our lips
Will be apples of gold.

— Florence French

GOOD SHEPHERD

In pastures of tender grass,
Beside waters of quietness
Thou resteth my soul.
In paths of beauty
Where only Thou couldst be
Thou walketh beside me.
Though shadows of adversity
Should stalk my path,
No evil can befall
For Thou art ever with me.

In the midst of crowds,
Confusion or misunderstandings,
Thou annointest me with peace;
My cup of gratitude runneth over.

So Thou art ever
Within the castle of my soul,
For Thy love and mercy,
Good Shepherd, endureth forever.

— Velta Myrle Allen

THE HEALING HILLS

Live closer to the healing hills
And harvest peace;
Deep in their blue tranquillity,
Your doubts will cease.

Live closer to the wind-tuned trees
And patient grass;
Learn from their calm identities
To let cares pass.

Live closer to the fertile fields,
Now winter-bare;
Learn faith and hope as spring again
Will make them fair.

— *Alice M. Swaim*

A Tale of the First Christmas

THE WHITE CAMEL

Mark Halpern

In the sparkling and unrestrained merry-making of Christmas Eve, there are moments when one can sense an all-pervasive deeper something that is difficult to put into mere words. Not only does it elude all finite language; but even thought itself seems to be transcended by the magic spell of breathless expectancy hovering in the mute fullness of the atmosphere. Imperceptibly, one is lifted out of oneself, as it were, into a gentle healing beatitude wherein such a prosaic thing as time no longer exists.

And then it is, as one allows oneself to enter into the very soul of the profound hush reverently enveloping the entire creation, there is heard calling in the distance a sound of mystic enchantment, like the faint wistful tinkling of a camel's bell. With each succeeding intonation, the weary overworked senses and the restless worldly thoughts become increasingly lulled. A vague nostalgic longing steals over one's being, a longing as though for something of infinite worth and beauty that had once been thought lost but which is now felt to be present. And before one realizes what has happened, one seems to be journeying effortlessly back, far back over ancient desert sands to the holiest and most wonderful of all nights....

THE SOFT VEIL OF TWILIGHT had enfolded the city of Jerusalem. In one of the humbler homes, which was illumined by an oil lamp and by the flames of a crackling fire in the hearth from which floated the pungent aroma of a steaming broth, a lad of three was playing with a tiny silver bell fastened to a loop of braided leather. Happily the child kept sounding the bell, swinging it to and fro in measured rhythm. Followed by the watchful gaze of his young mother, who sat at the fireplace embroidering, he was marching up and down the room, holding out one little hand, as though to find the guidance his wide-open but unseeing eyes denied him. And all the while he kept merrily singing out: *"Here comes the white camel! Here comes the white camel!..."*

Finally the mother stepped directly in front of him and knelt there, waiting in his path. His little face twisting into a big sleepy yawn, the lad marched straight into her outstretched arms. Hugging her

son to her breast, she gently patted his head, saying, "There now, Joel —you have had enough for this evening. It is getting close to bedtime."

The child quickly straightened, shaking his head. "But Joel does not want to go to bed yet, Mommy. Joel wants to wait up for Father."

"Yes, I know, my precious one," the mother said with a smile as she stroked his hair. "You want Father to get down on the floor and be the white camel, so you can put this little silver bell around his neck and ride upon his back, while he rocks you up and down."

JOEL NODDED EAGERLY. "It's great fun, Mommy, riding on Father's back. He's so big and strong and—and—"

"Yes—Father is big and strong and so willing. But even he becomes tired after parading for hours with the other guards at King Herod's palace, my little darling. So perhaps, for a change, we had better not ask him to be the white camel this evening. Let us give Father a chance to have a good rest."

And rising to her feet with the child in her arms, the mother carried him to his little bed in the adjoining room. But once she had tucked him in for the night, the child pleased, "Joel would like to hear Mommy sing *Angels' Lullaby* before he goes to sleep."

Giving him a tender smile, the young mother sat down beside the little bed and passed her fingers affectionately over Joel's face. Then, in a subdued voice, she began:

"Sleep...sleep...slumberland is calling,
Sleep...sleep...while the angels sing...
With dreams will come a-stealing
Voices soft and healing,
Singing Angels Lullaby..."

Tiptoeing out of the bedchamber, the mother advanced to the fireplace and bent over the violently hissing kettle to look after the broth. But as the sound of quickly approaching footsteps came from without, she straightened and turned eagerly to face the door.

In the next moment, the door was flung thunderously open and a towering, broad-shouldered young giant stormed into the house. He was clad in the fashion of the King's guards, his highly polished helmet and breastplate flashing resplendently in the lamplight. Hurriedly removing his helmet and placing it upon the table, he began to unfasten his girdle. Avoiding the young mother's gaze, he addressed her excitedly: "Quick,

Lydia! I must be on my way again—an important mission for King Herod. I must change into my civilian garb."

"But, Ethan, you will have some food first, will you not?"

"No time for food, beloved. I must be gone, I tell you. Please fetch the clothes while I get these things off."

HER PUZZLED EYES regarding her husband's hurried movements with growing anxiety, Lydia left the room. Soon she reappeared, bearing some garments and a pair of plain street sandals, which she handed to him, saying: "Not eating here tonight—no time for food? Why? Has a rebellion broken out amongst the people?"

"No, Lydia—there is no rebellion. King Herod does not have to worry about that just now. But just the same, the King will not sleep a wink tonight. There is something else he seems to fear far more than a rebellion."

"What else can the King have to fear, Ethan?"

"Have you not heard? It is rumored a child has been born in Bethlehem this eventide, to fulfill the prophecy of the ancient prophets of Israel. They foretold that out of Bethlehem would come the great King of kings, the Holy Messiah, who should reign over all the tribes of Israel."

Lydia nodded slowly to herself. "Ah—now I see why Herod will not sleep this night. And I begin to sense why you are so upset, Ethan and in such a hurry to be on your way. You say you are on a mission for Herod? To Bethlehem, perhaps?"

" Yes,—yes, to Bethlehem. Let us not waste words, or I shall never get these things on me."

" And—and—to find the newborn babe? And—and—" The words froze on her lips as her eyes widened in horror.

"Say no more, Lydia. I will not hear it from your lips, do you understand? Leave me in peace while I dress."

"Hush, Ethan—my beloved one. You will wake little Joel."

"Fear not. I shall not wake the lad. And it is for his sake I must not fail King Herod this night. You know how much Joel means to me. I would give my life if it would bring his sight back. Have I not mentioned to you over and over that Zariah of Bethany has offered to make the child see again—for a thousand talents? And I have worried ever

since how I could hope to raise that much."

AN UNHAPPY SIGH escaped from the young mother. "I wish you could get that old magician out of your mind."

"How can I? Day and night I keep hearing his sly taunting words mocking me: '...Not able to raise a mere thousand talents, Ethan? Ha-ha-ha...Surely you are not serious. But—if you are—why then, I will make a bargain with you—a very fair bargain, Ethan. You see, I like you, my young giant. So I want to make it easy for you to pay me for restoring your son's eyesight. If you cannot find a way to raise the thousand talents—then find me a white camel, Ethan, and your little Joel shall see again. A white camel, Ethan—all I ask is a white camel. Ha-ha...ha-ha...'"

Gently Lydia reached over and patted her husband's powerfully developed forearm. "Hush, Ethan—I cannot bear listening to that insane laugh again. You have repeated the story often enough—until even little Joel has been affected. At night he often dreams about the white camel—we have both heard him speaking to it in his sleep. And in the daytime it seems he has time for no other game but tinkling his little silver bell and singing out 'Here comes the white camel'! Sometimes it is more than I can bear."

"NEITHER CAN I bear it, Lydia. I must get my hands on a thousand talents before I go mad."

"But where can you get that much money? It would be just as easy to find a white camel."

"Not only is it possible for me to have a thousand talents before the morrow dawns, but I can have *five* thousand talents, Lydia!"

"Where could you possibly get that much money, Ethan?"

"From King Herod, my dear one. And that is not all. How would you like your devoted husband to be Captain of the Guard? Yes, Lydia—*Captain of the Guard,* I said. But do not stare at me that way. If you had been at Herod's palace a little while ago, everything would be clear to you."

"Don't be so mysterious, Ethan. What happened at the palace?"

"King Herod had three wonderful guests—three Wise Men from the East—kings themselves, they seemed to be! They had entered the city on three of the biggest camels the people here had ever seen, in-

quiring after the newborn Christ Child. They said they had seen His star in the East and had come to worship Him."

"THE CHRIST CHILD? Go on—go on, Ethan!"

"When the words of the three Wise Men were reported to Herod, he ordered me and two other guards to bring them into his presence. When the Wise Men stood before his throne, he summoned the chief priests and scribes, demanding of them where the Christ should be born. And they said to him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus say the prophets!' Then Herod, after the priests and scribes were gone, addressed himself to the eldest of the Wise Men, who called himself Gaspar: 'You have heard that it was prophesied that the child should be born in Bethlehem. Go and search diligently for the Christ Child, and when you have found Him, bring me word again that I may come and worship Him also!"

Lydia shook her head excitedly. "They should not have believed him—he is full of lies and deceit! He means no good to the newborn babe!"

Frowning impatiently at her interruption, Ethan continued: "When the Wise Men had gone on their way, Herod dismissed all who were present except me. He said he had a mission for me that would take me to Bethlehem—adding that Garak had become a stupid bungler of late and was not to be trusted as Captain of the Guard. Herod made it plain that he wanted me to travel to Bethlehem alone and in my civilian clothes—the uniform of the King's guard would attract too many eyes and cause those with the newborn babe to be warned and make their escape from Bethlehem. And my reward for disposing of the child is to be the Captaincy of the Guard—and five thousand talents. So do not detain me any longer, Lydia. I must be on my way."

A DEATHLY PALLOR spread over Lydia's gentle face. "You are not going, Ethan? Oh, my beloved one—what has come over you lately? Do you realize what you have agreed to do?"

"*Agreed* to do? I have been *commanded* by my king to do it. And you know that to disobey Herod is to forfeit my head. Please, Lydia, this is no time for one of your sermons. I have become weak and soft since we married. Before I knew you, my strength was respected by all—none dared to stand in my way. But now, ever since you have been filling me with your feminine talk of love and mercy, I am the laughing stock of Herod's guards. They call me the gentle giant."

"And is that a name to be ashamed of, Ethan? Why should man be so proud of brute force and feel ashamed of the nobler and more refined side of his nature? If only all men could but hear the saintly voice of my youthful friend Mary, whom I knew in Nazareth! I still can see her radiant face, so full of pure sweetness and compassion. Though she was younger than I, I looked up to her as older and much wiser than myself. One day, while we were seated under a tree from where she was gazing up to the sky, she began to speak as though to herself. I have never forgotten these words that came from her:

"'Ah, fair world, beautiful handiwork of the Father. All creation is waiting for the birth of Selfless Love, the Prince of Peace, who will reign with gentleness and infinite compassion and banish hate and cruelty from the earth...'"

LYDIA BECAME STRANGELY SILENT, her gentle face transfigured with an unearthly glow, her deep soft eyes gazing far beyond the walls of their little home. For a moment it seemed that the young giant, who had finished changing into his civilian attire and was nervously adjusting his dagger in the girdle beneath the upper garment, was held despite himself by what he had heard and by what he saw in Lydia's illumined features. Then, with a fierce effort, as though rousing himself from a trance, he turned from her and stormed out of the house.

The air that night sparkled with cheerful life. All the heavens were brightly robed as for some momentous occasion, a benign moon lavishly flooding the earth with her reflected glory while attended by her celestial concourse of wondrously gleaming stars. But Ethan's journey on the road to Bethlehem was a despondent one. Try as he would, he could not blot out of his mind the look of deep hurt and unutterable sorrow that had leaped into Lydia's eyes as he had turned from her and left the house. As he rode along on his horse, his heart growing heavier with each passing moment, it seemed to him that he had become the most forsaken man in all the world.

ON ARRIVING IN BETHLEHEM, the young giant soon became aware that his horse seemed to be guided by some higher sense. It gave no heed to the directing jerks of the reins, but chose a path of its own through the bustle of the crowded town. Now and then Ethan brought the horse to a halt to question some man or woman regarding the Christ Child, but for the most part he permitted the animal to take the lead. Thus he was led, as though guided by some invisible companion rider, to

the stable wherein the Christ Child had been born. Dismounting, he tied the horse to a tree and started for the entrance.

Some shepherds had approached, their ruddy faces animated with hopeful and eager excitement, each bearing in his hands a gift. So engrossed were they in their anticipation of beholding the newborn babe, that they were unmindful of the young giant's presence. Ethan paused for a moment and then caught sight of the magnificent camels of the three Wise Men of the East. The great beasts were kneeling patiently on the ground nearby, the opulent flood of moonlight falling in a preternatural pallor upon their massively humped bodies, until they appeared to be three fabulous monsters carved from stone.

A peculiar sense of unreality stole over Ethan. From the shadowy hills he thought he heard floating down to him a gladsome singing as of a heavenly chorus. The very earth seemed to give forth an uplifting fragrance. But the sound of voices from within the stable caused him to become alert. Moving noiselessly, he advanced to the entrance and peered in.

WHAT HE SAW INSIDE only deepened the strange sense of wonder that was creeping over him. Scarcely breathing, he permitted his eyes to drink in the glory he beheld within that humble stable. In a radiant aura of supernal light, among swaddling clothes of richly variegated colors embroidered in ancient designs, lay the Christ Child. Near the manger, gazing serenely down at the babe, reposed the youthful mother upon a cushioned bench; and behind her stood a tall, kindly-looking man of noble bearing.

Kneeling upon the earth before the manger were the three Wise Men, their gifts of gold, myrrh and frankincense placed near the mother and babe. To one side stood the silent shepherds, their heads bowed, their hands clasped over their breasts.

The holy light that emanated from the young mother's eyes and passed to and fro between herself and the babe, almost blinded Ethan, until he had to shift his gaze. Then he heard the mother speak, addressing herself to the man of gentle dignified mien who stood behind her: "Look, Joseph, how pure and radiant is the skin of the babe. Is he not of rare and unearthly beauty and wondrous to behold? Is he not indeed the Prince of Peace, who shall one day reign as a truly wise and compassionate King and banish greed and hate and cruelty from the earth?"

HE OF THE GRACIOUS BEARING, to whom she had spoken,

nodded with a warm, understanding smile. "Yes, Mary, the babe is in truth wondrous to behold. Marvelous is the dazzling light and beauty that enfolds the child. And yet, Mary, your own loveliness is of a heavenly beauty beyond words and like unto that of the babe."

"Ah, Joseph, give me your hand. You are a man a woman can lean on in moments of greatest necessity. You are a man of gentle heart and courageous purpose—a man of God."

"Nay, Mary. You do me too much honor. But rest your voice now —you have need of repose. From what Gaspar has told us, we shall have to be moving on to the land of the Nile. Is it not so, Gaspar?"

The eldest of the kneeling Wise Men nodded gravely. "Even so, Joseph. Herod will not rest while he knows the babe is alive. He has already commanded that the Christ Child be done away with before dawn. Even at this moment the life of the babe is in danger."

ETHAN'S GIANT BODY TREMBLED. The crushing weight of all eternity seemed to weigh upon him in that one moment of onrushing destiny. Large cold beads of sweat kept breaking out over his face.

Then something, as though a still voice of infinite tenderness calling to his soul, impelled him to glance again upon the newborn infant in the manger. As he did so, he felt himself transfixed by an unearthly light radiating to him from the glowing eyes of the babe. In the next moment it seemed to him that the face of the Christ Child had changed into the face of little Joel! And Joel's eyes, luminous with the same unearthly light, was gazing straight at him, into the very depths of his being! He could never have torn himself away from that awesome radiance coming from the Child in the manger had not a sudden echoing peal, as of some mighty cosmic bell tolling the hour of universal crisis, sounded through the corridors of his consciousness and brought him back to the world of time and space.

Thus it was that the young giant managed to turn about and make his way to the tree where he had left his horse. Untying the animal, he mounted and started his journey homeward to Jerusalem. The farther his horse carried him from that humble stable, the darker the night grew. When he had left Bethlehem far behind, Ethan's head hung despairingly on his chest, as though crushed with the gloom of his future...

UPON ARRIVING IN FRONT OF HIS HOME, he heard the tinkling of Joel's little silver bell. Then, as he dismounted from his horse,

the door opened and Lydia flew out of the house and into his arms.

"Oh Ethan, Ethan, my beloved one!" she cried out. "I thought you would never return. How happy I am to see your face!"

"What is going on here, Lydia? What is little Joel doing up at this hour? Sounds like he is playing with his bell in the back yard."

"Yes, Ethan—the sound of the bell is coming from the yard. Something wonderful has happened! Come and see for yourself."

Lydia, her eyes flooding with happy tears, took Ethan by the hand and led him to the rear of their little home. What the young giant beheld there in the bright moonlight caused him to gasp. Kneeling upon the ground was a great camel of *pure white!* Seated upon the camel and gazing joyously at Ethan, with excited *seeing* eyes, was little Joel swinging the silver bell.

"Father—Father!" the child called out. "Please help Joel put the bell around the white camel's neck!"

Ethan tried to speak. But he could only stand there with his mouth open as he looked entreatingly to Lydia for an explanation.

HER GENTLE FACE GLOWING with her great joy, the young mother excitedly related: "After you had departed, Ethan, our child awoke and asked for his silver bell. Nothing I could do or say would persuade him to fall asleep again. An hour or more must have passed, when suddenly he looked at me with a happy cry—and I saw that his eyes were seeing me. Oh, Ethan, how I wept and laughed over him—and prayed that God would send you back safe, with your hands free of that guilty deed Herod commanded you to do. Then, a little while ago, the three Wise Men you told me about rode up. The eldest knocked at the door. When I opened it, behold! there was this white beast standing proudly behind their own three camels. The Wise Man spoke thus to me:

"'"Fear not, my child. This night your beloved husband has proven himself a true follower of the newborn King. When he returns, tell him that I and my companions journey back to our own lands. Mary and Joseph will leave Bethlehem this very night with the babe, to travel southward to the land of the Nile, to the city of Khada. The white camel knows the way.

"Then he took his leave with his two companions."

GIVING A SUDDEN BELLOWING CHEER, the young giant came

to life. "Why are we standing here, then? Quick! Let us gather food and clothing and be on our way! I am not ready yet to forfeit my head to Herod!"

"On our way, Ethan? Where to?"

"Why, to the land of the Nile—to the city of Khada. Did you not hear the Wise Man say that was the destination of Mary and Joseph? Do you not recall Mary of Nazareth—your friend? I knew it the moment I heard her speak. She uttered the same words you have often repeated to me."

"Ah—yes, Ethan! My heart tells me it is the same Mary. How I shall love to be with her!"

So, within the hour, the white camel, with little Joel's silver bell tied about its neck and tinkling contentedly, was bearing Ethan, his wife and son southward to the mystic desert land of the Nile. Lydia sat in front of Ethan, leaning blissfully back on her young giant, and holding Joel in her lap as she sang the child to sleep with "Angels' Lullaby." Her singing became gradually softer, finally drifting into a peaceful humming.

WITH MEASURED DIGNIFIED STRIDE, as though conscious of the Holy Ones to whom it was bringing its three riders, the mighty white camel traveled onward into the night, slowly disappearing from view. And the tinkling of the little silver bell became fainter and fainter, until it was swallowed in the magic stillness of that most wonderful of all nights...

SIMPLE TRUTH

If you will walk three steps in repentance
Toward Christ, then He
Will advance to meet you
A mile in mercy.

— *E. D. Taylor*

BY JESUS' SIDE

By Jesus' side
I walked today,
He was my guide
Along the way.

On stony land
And stormy sea
His dear pierced hand
In love led me.

Beneath my cross,
Enduring pain,
I drank life's dross
His peace to gain.

By Jesus' side
I learned the way—
Love opens wide
Eternal Day.

— Loreta Inman

THE ANGEL OF RELEASE

Spiritual awakening is the *Angel of Release* which rolls away the stone that seals man in the darkness of the tomb of ignorance, and delivers him into the Light of Understanding. In that light he ascends, from a world of illusion into the world of Reality; from the temporal into the Fulness of Life.

VERILY, IGNORANCE is the cause of all of man's troubles. More than anything else, man needs illumination. And so, may the unceasing prayer of our hearts be: *Let there be Light.*

— Harry Halsey Starrett

RENEWAL

Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth,
Who faintest not, neither art weary,
Whose understanding cannot be fathomed,
Who givest power to the faint and strength to the weak:
We wait upon Thee to renew our strength,
That we may mount up with wings as eagles,
And may run and not be weary,
And may walk and not faint. Amen.

— *Roy Wallace Thomas*

DAILY PRAYER

It is Thee, O Lord, I want,
nothing else will do.

To be possessed of Thee and by Thee,
to be led by Thee and have fellowship
with Thee is my heart's desire.

O lead my feet in Thy paths today and
may my thoughts, words and deeds be
pleasing unto Thee.

Help me to remember that in serving
my fellowman, I am serving Thee,

That any kindness done in Thy name
is acceptable unto Thee.

Overcome all doubts and fears with
the knowledge of the fullness of
Thy great love toward me.

— *Verna Coppinger*

FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM...

PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT lesson the Scriptures teach is that power belongs to God. Paul recorded his grateful recognition that divine power is active in human thought when he wrote (Phil. 2:13), "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

Undoubtedly divine power is working in human consciousness when good is expressed there, when constructive, useful, and beneficial capabilities shape the accomplishments of thinkers. Christian Science makes it clear that such power, or ability to act, is increased when it is recognized that power has its source in God and is only reflected by the individual. All may avail themselves of it to any degree. God withholds no measure of His might.

THE GREAT MUSICIAN is one who subordinates self to the music he expresses. The great writer is one who forgets self in contemplating the magnitude of the concepts he records. The great religionist is one who loses self as he humbly acknowledges the presence of the one God..."I can of mine own self do nothing...I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." (John 5:30)

The struggle for perfection...becomes less arduous in the proportion that one realizes that God is responsible for all perfection. Then one stops laboring to produce perfection through a personal sense of good and lets divine power work in him to obliterate whatever claims to prevent perfection.

—Helen Wood Bauman
in Christian Science SENTINEL

We feel and know that we are eternal.

— *Spinoza*

NOTICES and COMMENTS

FIP FIELD TRIP. At the last meeting of our Board of Trustees it was decided that Miss Kathryn G. Brown, our able Executive Secretary, should take a Western trip to meet some long-time friends of the Fellowship. Our first Executive Secretary, the late Carl A. Evans, founder of the organization, had always wanted to make such a trip but was never able to do so. Miss Brown accepted the assignment but insisted that because of her lack of public speaking experience, there be no public meetings. Events determined otherwise, however, and led her to address a special prayer group meeting in Forest Park, Illinois in commemoration of United Nations Day, and to engage in a televised interview in Lima, Ohio. Both these occasions were successful; and it is estimated that the television program had an audience of 40,000.

Miss Brown's own words are most pertinent and illuminating: "On October 23 I flew to Chicago and was entertained in the home of a loyal and devoted member of our Fellowship. On United Nations day I spoke informally to a sizeable group of people of various faiths and denominations, including members of the clergy. Following my talk there was a question and answer period. The responses were most gratifying. Some of the questions and answers showed a penetrating insight into the most critical issues of our day and an inspiring courage in grappling with the basic problems.

"The next day I flew to Lima, Ohio where I received an overwhelming reception. I met a number of people there and was interviewed by the press and on television. On Thursday night some Fellowship friends from Indiana drove 70 miles through hazardous weather to meet me.

"Indeed, it was a heart-warming experience to greet so many people and receive their expressions of appreciation and endorsement of what we are doing. I returned to the office with renewed faith and added courage. I extend to all my deep gratitude for the many efforts and prayers (that gave me strength and fortitude) which combined to make this initial trip a memorable and successful occasion for the Fellowship."

NEW ADVISOR. Miss Elisabeth Achelis of New York City has accepted our invitation to become a Fellowship in Prayer Advisor for the Eastern Zone. For the past thirty-five years Miss Achelis has actively sponsored an improved and stabilized World Calendar, the plan of which has been before the League of Nations and the United Nations awaiting approval. During her many years of work on this project she has been in close touch with numerous Protestant ministers, Catholic priests, and religious leaders among Jews and Moslems. She has worshipped in churches of various denominations and has visited synagogues. She writes that "it is like visiting different nations, meeting people of other lands and partaking of their hospitality. The doors of all churches should be open to everyone. All should be welcome in spiritual unity—not alike, but gloriously alive in the variety of their worship of God. The goal should be toward spiritual union expressed in various ways." Miss Achelis is thoroughly in sympathy with our work and will, we are sure, be of great help to the Fellowship.

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NEW FOREIGN ZONE ADVISOR. We are happy to welcome to the Fellowship a new and valuable advisor for the foreign zone, Prof. Mohammed F. M. Awad, Ph.D., of Cairo, Egypt. Professor Awad has been a well-known Muslim journalist for the past twenty-five years. Recently he has come in contact with our work and has become an enthusiastic supporter in his area. He writes: "Your publication has high aims for promoting friendship, for serving peace and humanity, and for better and purer understanding between all nations all over the world." On page 16 we are glad to introduce Professor Awad to our readers with his moving and timely exhortation, *Pray for World Peace,* whose sentiments will find an echo in every heart, and in every mind that has comprehended the dangerous reality of our modern age.

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CHRISTMAS CARDS. Our October announcement about the especially beautiful Christmas Cards we have made available for our readers and friends was received with much enthusiasm. Many orders have come in, testifying to the widespread response, for which we are grateful. There is still time to send in your orders for these unusually attractive cards, but we urge you to do so as promptly as possible.

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LIBRARY NEWS. Members and friends interested in the FIP library will be pleased to learn that a number of important new additions have been received in the past month. Mrs. S. Strauss, of New York City, one of our strongest supporters and allies, has donated several significant

volumes, including Mary Baker Eddy's *Science and Health.* Anonymous donors have kindly supplied us with such outstanding books as *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Man and God* by Victor Gollancz (the famous anthology); also, *Seven Great Bibles* by A. W. Martin, a discussion of seven great world faiths. We shall, of course, keep our readers informed of further news about the FIP library, which is still in the process of consolidation and arrangement.

CONTRIBUTORS. FIP continues to attract new writers, several of whom are appearing in this issue for the first time: Grace Barker Wilson of Farmington, New Mexico; Velta Myrle Allen of Long Beach, California; Estelle D. Taylor of Cottontown, Tennessee; Verna Coppinger of Paducah, Kentucky; and Dr. Mohammed F. M. Awad, of Cairo, Egypt. May we extend to each of these writers a most cordial welcome to our pages.

It is good to have Swami Parampanthi with us again, on page 10. The Swami graciously granted us permission to print some enlightening excerpts from a long letter he recently sent us. Readers may recall his very helpful and informative article of two years ago on *The Spirit of Hinduism*...Mark Halpern's splendid Christmas Tale, *The White Camel,* is our feature contribution for this issue. Despite its unusual (and unprecedented) length for this publication, we decided to include it in this number because of its timeliness and inspirational value and because we so rarely obtain fiction manuscripts which we are eager to print.

FIP INTEREST. Readers will be glad to know that there has been a definite increase of interest in our work around the world. Heartening letters of appreciation and commendation have been received from new friends in distant places. At the same time the expansion of our work in this country has met with an ever-increasing response from helpful individuals. We are most grateful at both these trends...We would like to remind our readers not to delay in mailing Christmas gift subscriptions of FIP to friends who they feel will be receptive to our work.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES. FIP is published six times a year at the rate of $3.00. Special rates are available for additional copies. Certain back issues are also available.

SEASON'S GREETINGS. May our contemplation of the birth of Jesus free us from fear and make us fitter instruments of peace and forgiveness in a world that so desparately needs all the love we can give it.

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TRUE RICHES

Nothing I have belongs to me;
all I have, belongs to all;

The more I give, the more I have;
in giving all, I have all.

Having nothing, I have everything;
having everything, I desire nothing.

Desiring nothing, I rest in peace—
"The peace of God which passeth all
understanding."

— Harry Halsey Starrett

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